

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CU-04 BIB-01 DHA-05 SSO-00
NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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O R 151550Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3401
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC

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BELGRADE FOR U.S. DEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, PINS, PROP, SOPN, UR, UR
SUBJECT: IZVESTIA OCTOBER 15 ARTICLE ATTACKS U.S. CORRESPONDENTS
AS SPIES

REF: (A) MOSCOW 12628, (B) MOSCOW 15544

1. SUMMARY: IN A 6-COLUMN, 42-INCH BLAST OBVIOUSLY TIMED FOR
BELGRADE CSCE, IZVESTIA OF OCTOBER 15 ACCUSES U.S. JOURNALISTS IN
GENERAL AND SOME OF THE PREVIOUSLY MOSCOW-BASED CORRESPONDENTS
IN PARTICULAR OF WORKING ON BEHALF OF U.S. ESPIONAGE AGENCIES.
(OCTOBER 15 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TASS CARRIES SHORT SUMMARY). UNDER
THE HEADLINE "WHO IS SOWING DISCORD" AND UNDER THE JOINT BYLINE
OF V. KASSIS AND M. MIKHAYLOV, IZVESTIA SINGLES OUT FORMER
MOSCOW CORRESPONDENTS AL FRIENDLY, JR. (THEN OF NEWSWEEK), GEORGE
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KRIMSKY (AP), ROBERT TOTH (LA TIMES), AND PETER OSNOS (WASHINGTON
POST) AS JOURNALISTS "IN NAME ONLY." "IT WAS NECESSARY," THE AR-
TICLE SAYS FOR ALL THOSE "TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION" AS "THEIR
ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES WERE UNMASKED." THERE IS NO FURTHER REFERENCE
TO FRIENDLY OR KRIMSKY; TOTH AND OSNOS ARE TREATED IN SOME DETAIL.
ARTICLE CONTRASTS "OPEN AND COLLEGIAL" WORKING CONDITIONS FOR
"PROPER" FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN THE SOVIET UNION WITH PICTURE OF

U.S. JOURNALISTS IN SERVICE OF OFFICIAL U.S. ESPIONAGE AGENCIES.
CARL BERNSTEIN'S RECENT ARTICLE IN "ROLLING STONE" IS AGAIN CITED
AS DOCUMENTARY PROOF. NO REFERENCE IS MADE TO ANY OF THE U.S. JOURN-
ALISTS NOW ASSIGNED IN MOSCOW. END SUMMARY.

2. IZVESTIA PIECE BOB TOTH HARDEST, DESCRIBING HIM FLATLY AS A
SPY. ARTICLE DETAILS HIS ALLEGEDLY SINISTER ACTIVITIES IN PART
BY CITING THE SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO HIM IN HIS VARIOUS TRIPS
OUT OF MOSCOW: THE STATE OF CIVIL DEFENSE IN TADZHIKISTAN, THE
CITY LAYOUT OF MURMANSK, ETC. IN HIS EFFORTS, IZVESTIA SAYS,
TOTH WAS "CONNECTED WITH MILITARY ATTACHES OF THE US EMBASSY."
FORMER ARMY ATTACHE WATERS IS SAID TO HAVE WRITTEN TOTH TO CONVEY
PRAISE FROM DIA CHIEF GENERAL SAM WILSON, WHO, ACCORDING TO IZVESTIA,
REFERRED TO TOTH AS "OUR BEST MAN IN MOSCOW." THE IZVESTIA REFER-
ENCE TO WATERS AND WILSON IS A SHORTER VERSION OF THE CHARGES CON-
TAINED IN THE AUGUST 31 LITERATURNAYA GAZETA (REF A).

3. PETER OSNOS IS NOT CHARACTERIZED AS A SPY, THOUGH HE IS SAID
TO HAVE BEHAVED "ILLEGALLY", AND S.L. LIPAVSKY'S ARTICLES IN IZ-
VESTIA (MARCH, 1977) ARE CITED IN EVIDENCE. OSNOS IS ACCUSED OF
USING THE "DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL OF THE U.S.A. EMBASSY" TO COMMUNI-
CATE WITH SOVIET EMIGRE V. RUBIN, WHO WAS GATHERING MATERIAL FOR
SENATOR JACKSON ON SOVIET CITIZENS WHO, "BECAUSE OF EARLIER WORK
INVOLVING GOVERNMENT SECRETS," WERE "TEMPORARILY" DENIED EXIT
VISAS. OSNOS'S CONTACTS WITH V. RUBIN ALSO ALLEGEDLY WERE TO SERVE
SENATOR JACKSON'S PURPOSE OF DENYING AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIP-
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MENT TO THE USSR BY "HEATING UP" ANTI-SOVIET FEELING IN THE U.S.A.
BY STAGING PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE EMPLOYEES OF THE SOVIET INSTI-
TUTIONS INTERESTED IN EXPANDED COMMERCIAL CONTACTS WITH THE U.S.
WHEN THEY WERE ON TRIPS ABROAD. OSNOS'S ALLEGED MISBEHAVIOR IN
MOLDAVIA WAS EARLIER REPORTED IN "SOVETSKAYA MOLDAVIYA AND TASS
(REF B). IZVESTIA REFERS TO THE SAME ALLEGATIONS, NOW CITING A
LETTER SAID TO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN THEIR OFFICES. ALLEGEDLY,
HAVING HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK IN A KISHINEV RESTAURANT, OSNOS EN-
COURAGED JEWISH CUSTOMERS TO APPLY FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL, THEN,
WHEN TRYING TO CROSS INTO ROMANIA WITH RUBLES, HE IS SAID TO HAVE
CREATED A SCENE AT THE BORDER RAILROAD STATION.

4. COMMENT: PURPOSE OF PRESENT ARTICLE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A
TOUCH OFF CAMPAIGN AGAINST MOSCOW-BASED U.S. CORRESPONDENTS OR
BUREAUS, THOUGH SPLATTER EFFECT POSSIBLE. RATHER, IN CURRENT BELGRADE
CSCE CONTEXT IS A MASSIVE COUNTERATTACK, CITING ALREADY ESTABLISHED
"CASES" AGAINST NAMED U.S. CORRESPONDENTS, TO UNDERLINE SOVIET
CONTENTION THAT IT IS THE WEST WHICH IS POISONING THE FREE EXCHANGE
OF INFORMATION BY USING JOURNALISTS AS SPIES AND IS PREVENTING THE
NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE. THE ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN AGAINST EXPANDED
TRADE WITH THE USSR, LET BY SENATOR JACKSON, THE "CRASS/ USE OF DIS-
SIDENTS BY U.S. ESPIONAGE AGENTS, AND THE ALLEGED EVEIL HAND OF THE

EMBASSY'S MILITARY ATTACHES, ARE FAMILIAR THEMES IN SOVIET MEDIA.
THE STRONG TIE-IN TO THE ACTIVITIES OF MOSCOW BASED CORRESPONDENTS
INDICATES AGAIN THAT CRITICISM VOICED AT THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW
OF SOVIET PRACTICE RE FACILITATING FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND BE-
HAVIOR TOWARD RESIDENT CORRESPONDENTS HAS STRUCK RAW NERVES IN
MOSCOW.
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